



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; American Lobster - Annual Trap Transfer Program

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before [Insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Adrienne Thomas, PRA Officer, NOAA, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 159, Asheville, NC 28801 (or via the Internet at PRAComments@doc.gov). All comments received are part of the public record. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or

copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Laura Hansen, Fishery Management Specialist, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; 978-281-9225, Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

Type of Review: Regular submission (Extension of a current information collection).
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests an extension to a current collection of information under OMB Control No. 0648-0673.

The American lobster fishery is cooperatively managed by the states and NMFS under the authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. This collection of information is in response to several addenda to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster that work to reduce trap fishing effort through limited entry fishing and trap allocation limit reductions. This program is intended to help control fishing effort while increasing economic flexibility in the American lobster trap fishery.

Currently, Federal lobster permit holders qualified to fish with trap gear in Lobster Conservation Management Areas 2 and 3 are undergoing scheduled annual trap allocation reductions of 5 percent per year until 2021 (Area 2) and 2020 (Area 3). In 2015, in an effort to help mitigate the economic burden of these reductions, NMFS and state agencies implemented the Lobster Trap Transfer Program that allows all qualified Federal lobster permit holders to buy and sell trap allocation from Areas 2, 3, or Outer Cape Cod. Each transaction includes a

conservation tax of 10 percent, which deducts a number of traps equal to 10 percent of the total number of traps with each transfer, permanently removing them from the fishery.

NMFS collects annual application forms from lobster permit holders who wish to buy and/or sell Area 2, 3, or Outer Cape Area trap allocation through the Trap Transfer Program. The transfer applications are only accepted during a 2-month period (from August 1 through September 30) each year, and the revised allocations for each participating lobster permit resulting from the transfers become effective at the start of the following Federal lobster fishing year on May 1. Both the seller and buyer of the traps are required to sign the application form, which includes each permit holder's permit and vessel information, the number of traps sold, and the revised number of traps received by the buyer, inclusive of the amount removed according to the transfer tax. Both parties must sign the form as an agreement to the number of traps in the transfer. The parties must date the document and show that the transferring permit holder has sufficient allocation to transfer and the permit holder receiving the traps has sufficient room under any applicable trap cap. This information allows NMFS to process and track transfers of lobster trap allocations through the Trap Transfer Program, and better enables the monitoring and management of the American lobster fishery as a whole.

II. Method of Collection

Applications for the Trap Transfer Program are accepted annually from August 1 through September 30 by mail, fax, or email.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0673.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (Extension of a current information collection).

Affected Public: Businesses or other for-profit organizations; Individuals or households; Federal government; and State, Local, or Tribal government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 102.

Estimated Time Per Response: 10 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 17.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$573.24 in reporting/recordkeeping costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental Lead PRA Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.

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